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	NSCE-00	NIMA-00	PA-00	MCC-00	GIWI-00	ISNE-00	DOHS-00
	FMPG-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	NCTC-00	BBG-00
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TAGS: PREL KDEM PHUM PGOV GH

SUBJECT: POST ELECTION, GHANA'S POLITICAL PARTIES REGROUP AND RECOVER

Classified By: Ambassador Teitelbaum for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (SBU) Summary. Ghana's political parties are regrouping following the December election. Members of the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) have voiced frustration over their belief that President Mills has shut out sections of the party from decision making. The NDC is also in the early stages of a succession struggle, fueled by speculation that Mills will be a one-term president. The New Patriotic Party (NPP) is coming to grips with life in the opposition. Party members are considering internal reforms, while a contest is already forming over who will be the party's 2012 candidate. Two smaller parties, the People's Convention Congress (PNC) and the Convention People's Party (CPP), struggle after losing ground in the general election. End Summary.

The NDC: Winning Is Also Hard

¶12. (C) The NDC is experiencing two separate, but related, sets of internal conflict. The first concerns party-administration relations. After years in opposition, the NDC faithful looked forward to jobs, access to power, and (in some cases) retribution against the NPP for alleged abuses of power. Sections of the party, encouraged by comments by former President Rawlings, quickly concluded that President Mills was moving too slowly on his campaign promises of change, and that party concerns--especially in the appointments process-- were not being addressed. The NDC Executive Committee met March 31, in a meeting attended by the current and former Presidents, the Vice President, and the party leadership. POLOFF met with Seth Ofori-Ohene, Director of Communications for the NDC, who said that the meeting was cordial, and not an angry debate as reported in the media. According to Ofori-Ohene, the party leadership feels marginalized by Mills and his close advisors, and that "90 percent of the party leadership is behind Rawlings, even if not publicly." (Note: Rawlings had been critical of the selection process for the seventy-plus minister and deputy minister appointments, believing that they do not fully represent all sections of the party, including some of those who remained the most faithful during the years in opposition. That said, the party was never significant when Rawlings was in power, and many view its emergence at this time as a cynical attempt to gain influence by Rawlings and others. End Note.) Ofori-Ohene predicted that within a few months the party will have secured greater control over the government's decision making. Days prior to the meeting, Rawlings had made reference to "characters" who had hijacked the party and who had an undue influence in the appointments process. Ofori-Ohene confirmed that the reference was to the

three Ahwoi brothers, including Kwesi Ahwoi, Minister of Agriculture and Food. The other brothers, Ato and Kwamina, were Rawlings era ministers; together, they are major financial backers of the party and early supporters of Mills going back to his days as Vice-President. Mills has fired back that Ghana has "one President."

13. (C) The NDC's second internal struggle is over succession. There are frequent media reports--although less evidence-- that President Mills is in poor health. Some of the health rumors appear to come from within the NDC, where several factions would not be disappointed to see an open spot at the top of the 2012 ticket. The Vice-President, John Mahama, is a potential candidate mentioned in succession talk. A northerner, popular with many in the party, he was a strong campaigner in the recent election. His competition includes Betty Mould-Iddrissu, the current Attorney-General. Mould-Iddrissu worked for the Commonwealth in London, and is an experienced attorney. She was the preferred 2008 vice-presidential choice of former First Lady, Nana Rawlings, and Mills' selection of Mahama was seen as a statement of independence from the Rawlings. The current Director-General of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization, Ekwon Spio-Gabrah, is also believed to be interested. Spio-Gabrah finished second to Mills in the party's primary. Finally, Kwesi Ahwoi is believed to be positioning himself, although it is not known how the recent dust-up over party-government relations will hurt his chances. The NDC will be holding elections for party officials in late 2009, by which time the various factions-- and their relative strengths-- should be clearer.

The NPP: Life in the Opposition

14. (C) POLOFF met in late March with Charles Owiredu, Director of International Relations for the NPP. Owiredu said that the party would be reviewing its constitution over the next several months. He predicted that the selection process for determining candidates for Parliament would be widened to include all registered party members in good standing in the primary. He acknowledged that the system used in 2008, where a few polling agents in each constituency made the decision, was open to abuse. (Note: Several constituency selections led to dissatisfaction at the local level. Four independents were elected to parliament in 2008, all of whom were former NPP members angry at not getting the nomination. In other cases, such as the conflict prone northern constituency of Yendi, independent-NPP candidates split the vote with the NPP candidate, allowing the NDC to win the seat. End Note). Owiredu noted that a review committee was being formed to investigate the reasons for the party's loss. Owiredu said that Nana Akufo-Addo and Alan Kyeremanteng, the party's rivals for the 2008 nomination, were the leading candidates for 2012.

The CPP: From Nkrumah to Nkrumah

5.(C) POLOFF and LES POL Specialist met with Dr. M.A. Sakara Foster, the CPP's 2008 vice-presidential candidate. Foster discussed the challenges the party faces introducing itself to a new generation of Ghanaians for whom the CPP and country's first leader, Kwame Nkrumah is only a figure in history. He noted that the party is constrained by its lack of finances, which gives the relatively few contributors too much influence over the selection of candidates. When asked who was the party leader, Foster was loyal to his running mate, Paa Kwesi Ndoum, although he acknowledged that Ndoum lacked broad acceptance, even within the party. (Note: In areas where the CPP was competitive in 2008, particularly the Western Region, parliamentary candidates received more votes than Ndoum. End Note.) Foster believes a credible solution for the CPP is to build up its seats in parliament, possible, he believes, if the NDC falters in government. Asked about the party's only MP, Samia Nkrumah, daughter of the first president, Foster said that she was not yet ready to lead the

party. He noted that she does not speak a Ghanaian language and will need more time in parliament to gain experience.

The PNC: Trying to Playing a Weak Hand

¶6. (C) The PNC, Ghana's perennial fourth party saw its 2008 presidential vote drop by half (to about 80,000 votes), along with dropping from four to two seats in parliament. The two seats, however, were exactly the number needed by the NDC to secure a minimum majority in parliament, and the PNC bargained hard, or at least thought it did, for a promise of its support. Alhaji Ahmed Ramadan, National Chairman of the PNC, told POLOFF that the NDC had promised two ministries, three deputy ministries, three ambassadorships and assorted other appointments, plus a street renamed for Hilla Limann, the PNC leader briefly Ghana's elected president between the Rawlings' military coups. To date, the government had delivered on one ministership, a ceremonial position without portfolio in the Office of the President, and one seat on the advisory Council of State. Despite the disappointment, Ramadan was philosophical, and thought the party would continue its relationship in Parliament with the NDC because any benefits of association were better than the alternative. He added that the party's four-time flag bearer, Dr. Edward Mahama, was pulling back from his participation in the party.

Party unity was an issue, he said, because the leadership did not endorse a candidate in the run-off election, and PNC members are divided as a result.

¶7. Comment: The internal conflict in the NDC reflects a disappointment by many long-time supporters that they are not yet sharing in the fruits of electoral victory. Rawlings' comments have given a voice to their discontent, although in a manner which weakens the authority of President Mills. Early in the new administration, the administration and the NDC are looking distracted by internal feuding, rather than focusing on governance, a situation which plays to those both in and out of the party who wish to portray Mills as a weak leader, not fully up to the job. End Comment.

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